

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS DHAKA 000606

SIPDIS

FOR I/FW, B/G, IIP/G/NEA-SA, B/VOA/N (BANGLA SERVICE) STATE  
FOR SA/PAB, SA/PPD (LSCENSNY, SSTRYKER), SA/RA, INR/R/MR,  
AND PASS TO USAID FOR ANE/ASIA/SA/B (WJOHNSON)

CINCPAC FOR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY ADVISOR, J51 (MAJ TURNER), J45  
(MAJ NICHOLLS)

USARPAC FOR APOP-IM (MAJ HEDRICK)

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KMDR](#) [OIIP](#) [OPRC](#) [KPAO](#) [PREL](#) [ETRD](#) [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [BG](#) [OCII](#)

SUBJECT: Media Reaction: Middle East; Dhaka

Summary: "The Daily Star" and "New Age," both English  
dailies, welcome negotiations and diplomacy from both the  
Palestinian people and Israel and hope for a positive  
development for both sides.

-----  
MIDDLE EAST  
-----

"Middle East Talks: Dawning of A New Era?  
Independent English language "The Daily Star" editorially  
comments (02/11/05):

We sincerely hope that the meeting between Israeli Prime  
Minister Ariel Sharon and Palestinian President Mahmoud  
Abbas signals a turning point in the long-standing conflict  
between the Israelis and the Palestinians.  
We can only consider the latest developments to be positive.  
Any initiative that helps the Palestinians towards self-  
determination and nationhood and relieves them of the burden  
of foreign military occupation must be considered a good  
thing. Similarly, we would welcome a situation where  
Israelis could live in peace and security and maintain  
friendly relations with its neighbor to the east.  
Obviously, negotiation is the way forward. Israel -- and the  
U.S. -- have long held that the principal stumbling block to  
peace was the late Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, and  
argued that there could be no negotiation as long as he  
remained in power. Well, now they have their wish. Let us  
hope that the Israelis will now agree to negotiate in good  
faith with Mahmoud Abbas rather than to dismiss him out of  
hand and use unrealistic expectations as to the extent of  
his control over militants as an excuse to drag their feet.  
Things look more promising than they have for many years. We  
only hope that this is not another false dawn as we have  
seen many times in the past, and that this time the  
expectations and promise are turned into concrete action for  
the benefit of the long suffering peoples of the region.

-----  
"A Cautious Beginning for Abbas"  
English daily "New Age" editorially comments (02/11/05):

If there is anything the Middle East is in need of today, it  
is clearly a climate of peace and calm after all these  
months of trouble. If the Abbas-Sharon deal can work,  
something of a breakthrough may actually be seen at the end  
of the day.

The stubborn way in which President Bush and Mr. Sharon  
refused to deal with Yasser Arafat in the final years of his  
life did not in any way advance the cause of peace. Mr.  
Arafat was considered, in a terrible example of bad  
judgment, as an obstacle by Washington and Tel Aviv. Perhaps  
there was much about Arafat's policies that was not  
correct, but what he stood for was significant for his  
fellow Palestinians. Now that he is dead, there is that hint  
of a suspicion that his successor may not be able to stand  
up to Israel and the United States when it is a matter of  
reaching a comprehensive, broad-based deal for the  
Palestinians.

There is also the important question of how militant  
organizations like Hamas observe the Abbas-Sharon agreement.  
In recent months, the leading figures of Hamas have  
systematically been wiped out through targeted Israeli  
assassinations. That has inevitably made Hamas weak and has  
raised questions about its ability to strike in the way it  
used to. That may be a good thing for the deal. But one will  
simply have to wait and see.

Thomas